

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 225352

PLS PASS SECRETARY VANCE'S PARTY AT CAMPDAVID

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 5160, ACTION SECSTATE INFO SITREP
COLLECTIVE USCINCEUR USNMR SHAPE CINCUSNAVEUR CINCUSAFE COMSIXTHFLT
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ROTA SPAIN DIA CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG USDOCOSOUTH 06 SEPT

QUOTE B O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5160

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, SEPT. 6, 1978, 1100 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 5132 (DTG 050930Z SEP 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AND SYRIAN SOLDIERS
AGAIN CLASHED IN THE AYN AR-RUMMANEH AND AL HADATH AREAS.
THERE WERE THREATS THAT FIGHTING WOULD BREAK OUT IN YET
ANOTHER AREA, THE CHRISTIAN TOWN OF KFAR SHIMA. PRESIDENT
SARKIS RETURNED TO BEIRUT FROM THE VATICAN. LEBANON'S
AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GHASSEN TUEINI, DELIVERED
A LETTER CALLING ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE
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POSSIBILITY OF REDEFINING THE DUTIES OF UNIFIL. THE
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND A PARLIAMENTARY SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORTEDLY REACHED AGREEMENT ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE
MILITARY CONCIL AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE NEW ARMY BILL.
END SUMMARY.

2. MORE FIGHTING IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH AREA.

AT AROUND 2400 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 5, HEAVY FIGHTING BROKE OUT AGAIN IN THE AYN AR-RUMMANEH AREA BETWEEN CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AND SYRIANS. SEVERAL SHELLS IMPACTED IN CORNICHE MAZRAA AREA OF WEST BEIRUT, WHERE THE MURABITUN AND SEVERAL PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS HAVE OFFICES, BUT THERE WERE NO REPORTED CASUALTIES. THE FIGHTING DIED DOWN AROUND 0530 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 6, BUT SOME SMALL ARMS FIRE IS CONTINUING AS OF 1100 HOURS.

3. MORE FIGHTING IN HADATH AREA.

A. BEGINNING AT 1300 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 5 CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AND SYRIAN SOLDIERS CLASHED FOR THE SECOND SUCCESSIVE DAY IN THE AL HADATH-BAABDA AREA. FIVE SHELLS IMPACTED NEAR BAABDA PALACE AT 1330 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 5, ABOUT ONE HOUR BEFORE PRESIDENT SARKIS RETURNED FROM THE VATICAN (SEE BELOW). ONE CIVILIAN WAS KILLED AND TWO GENDARMES WOUNDED AT THE PALACE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. (NLP MEMBER NABIL NOUJAYM TOLD US SEPTEMBER 5 THAT PHALANGE MILITIAMEN HAD SET UP MORTAR POSITIONS AROUND THE PALACE AND WERE FIRING ON THE SYRIANS, WHO WERE FIRING BACK.)

B. THE FIGHTING DIED DOWN AROUND 1730 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 5, ALTHOUGH SPORADIC SMALL ARMS FIRE IS
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CONTINUING AS OF 1100 HOURS, SEPTEMBER 6.

4. OTHER SECURITY MATTERS.

A. FIGHTING MAY BREAK OUT IN YET A NEW AREA, THE CHRISTIAN TOWN OF KFAR SHIMA, ABOUT HALFWAY BETWEEN BEIRUT AND ALEY. RIGHTIST LE REVEIL REPORTED THAT SYRIAN FORCES HAD THREATENED ON SEPTEMBER 5 TO SHELL KFAR SHIMA BECAUSE MILITIAMEN THERE HAD "ALLEGEDLY" FIRED ON A SYRIAN SOLDIER. LE REVEIL ALSO NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL KIDNAPPINGS IN THE AREA. (AN AMERICAN CITIZEN DISAPPEARED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN KFAR SHIMA AND ALEY ON AUGUST 29. SEE BEIRUT 5027).

B. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, THE FIGHTING BETWEEN GUNMEN OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL AND PHALANGE PARTIES IN THE EAST BEIRUT SUBURB OF JDEIDE ON SEPTEMBER 5 OCCURRED WHEN A GROUP OF PHALANGISTS TRIED TO TAKE OVER OFFICES IN A BUILDING IN THE NEW COMMERCIAL CENTER OF ZALKA (NEAR JDEIDE). THE PHALANGISTS WISHED TO USE THE OFFICES FOR THEIR RADIO STATION, THE VOICE OF LEBANON, BUT WERE OPPOSED BY MILITIAMEN OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL

PARTY, THE PAPER SAID.

C. MEANWHILE, LE REVEIL REPORTED ON SEPTEMBER 6 THAT SIX SYRIAN SOLDIERS DIED AS THE RESULT OF THE EXPLOSION WHICH DESTROYED THEIR BUS ON SEPTEMBER 4 IN MDEIREJ (SEE SEPTEMBER 5 SITREP). IKE SAID THAT "RELIABLE SOURCES" HAD DETERMINED THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS NOT ACCIDENTAL, BUT WAS CAUSED BY A CHARGE PLANTED IN A VOLKSWAGON (NOT A FIAT) NEXT TO THE MAIN ROAD.

D. SUMMING IT ALL UP, FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS TOLD REPORTERS SEPTEMBER 5 THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON AS A WHOLE WAS "GOOD".

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5. PRESIDENT RETURNS.

PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS RETURNED TO BEIRUT SEPTEMBER 5 AFTER REPRESENTING LEBANON AT THE CORONATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL I AT THE VATICAN. SARKIS HAD LEFT FOR THE VATICAN ON SEPTEMBER 3. HE MADE NO STATEMENTS ON HIS RETURN TO BEIRUT.

6. LETTER TO THE U.N.

ACCORDING TO THE BEIRUT PRESS, LEBANON'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GHASSEN TUEINI, DELIVERED A LETTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 4 WHICH ASKED THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF "REDEFINING" THE DUTIES OF UNIFIL TO INSURE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426. THE LETTER DID NOT EXPLAIN HOW THE DUTIES SHOULD BE RE-DEFINED. THE LETTER ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOL RESERVED THE RIGHT TO CALL A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WHENEVER IT DEEMED IT NECESSARY OR USEFUL.

7. WORK ON NEW ARMY BILL.

THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND A PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL, THE MAJOR STRUCTURAL INNOVATION PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW ARMY BILL, ACCORDING TO IKE. THE AGREEMENT WAS ANNOUNCED BY DEFENSE MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS ON SEPTEMBER 5. THE MEMBERS WOULD INCLUDE:

(1) THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY, VICTOR KHOURY, A MARONITE, AS CHAIRMAN;

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(2) THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL
(NOT YET NAMED;

(3) THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF
DEFENSE, DR. HASSAN AL HASSAN, A SHIA; AND,

(4) TWO SENIOR OFFICERS. PARKER UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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